



HEADQUARTERS  
MULTI-NATIONAL CORPS-IRAQ  
BAGHDAD, IRAQ  
APO AE 09342

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

MNCI-CG

MEMORANDUM FOR IRAQ SECURITY FORCE TRANSITION TEAM MEMBERS

SUBJECT: Commander's Welcome

1. Congratulations on your assignment to a transition team. Embedded transition teams are a key factor in the enhancement of the capability and professionalism of the Iraqi Security Forces. Your mission is absolutely vital to our success! You will live, work and operate with an Iraqi unit. You will mentor, coach, and support them, so that they can achieve a counter-insurgency capability. Our overall strategy in Iraq, is that we're going to stand up the Iraqi Security Forces and as they do, we'll stand down. Transition teams are an integral part of our entire strategy.
2. Our goal is to create Iraqi Security Forces that can fight and win, sustain themselves, who will take ownership of their duties, and understands the concepts of duty to a democratic nation. The Iraqi Security Forces attain these goals by establishing a competent chain of command, gaining experience, gaining confidence, following your example, following your advice, and then taking the fight to the enemy.
3. Effective advising begins by establishing a cordial relationship. This takes time, patience and commitment and will require you to treat everyone with dignity and respect. Praise openly and often, provide negative feedback in private--- and never embarrass anyone in public. Be very careful about jumping in and trying to do things for the units you are advising. They understand the American mentality of accomplishing the mission and will let you if you allow it. When you take "defacto" command, know that you are hindering and not helping the mission.
4. You will encounter frustrations. Iraqi culture is a rich and historic one, but very different than ours. We all know this. However, as an advisor, you must overcome any differences to help facilitate their success. You will also deal with frustrations from your Coalition partners. Many have not worked with transition teams before and may not always understand your capabilities and limitations.
5. Each and every member of a transition team is a leader – from the team chief to the most junior Soldier! Transition teams influence American, Coalition, and especially Iraqi Soldiers, National Police and Border Police. As leaders, you must set the enduring and positive example for them. Though it is not easy or very glamorous, it is critical to any long term success we hope to achieve in Iraq. Our focus may be on Baghdad at the moment, but our aim is to buy the Government of Iraq and its security forces time to

gain the experience and capacity they need to fully establish themselves. We cannot be successful in Iraq unless this country has the necessary means to protect itself and maintain an acceptable level of stability. The brave Iraqis you will help to develop are risking much to defend their country. They are putting their lives on the line, just as you are, everyday. The Iraqis you will work with, more than anyone, have the desire to learn from you so that eventually, they will have the knowledge and skills to keep their families and homes safe from harm.

6. I know you will put all you have into this mission. By doing so, you are giving the Iraqi Security Forces a chance to take the lead in protecting their people. As a member of a transition team, your efforts and actions will have a huge impact on the successful outcome of our mission. I know you will succeed and that you will continue to make us all proud. I am constantly amazed by what our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines of Multi National Corps-Iraq accomplish every day. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Odierno', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Raymond T. Odierno  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding